



# AGENCY ACTION NOTICE

1. TITLE		2. DOCUMENT NUMBER
<b>NEW TECHNOLOGY IN GAS WATER HEATERS CAN SAVE LIVES CPSC, GAMA SAY NEW HEATERS WILL PREVENT FIRES FROM FLAMMABLE VAPORS</b>		<b>AAN-U-03-132</b>
		3. DATE <b>09 JULY 2003</b>
4. SUBMITTING AGENCY	5. AGENCY POC ( NAME, ADDRESS, PHONE, MAIL)	
<b>US CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION 5401 WESTBARD AVENUE WASHINGTON, DC 20207</b>	<b>CPSC MEDIA CONTACT: SCOTT WOLFSON, (301) 504-7051 GAMA MEDIA CONTACT: MICHAEL BLEVINS (703) 525-7060, EXT. 235 CPSC CONSUMER HOTLINE: (800) 638-2772</b>	
6. DISCUSSION		
<b>FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE</b> <b>JULY 8, 2003</b> <b>RELEASE # 03-158</b>		
<p><b>WASHINGTON, D.C. - Picture this: a plastic can filled with gasoline is innocently left on the garage floor, near a gas water heater. A 4-year- old boy playing in the garage tips over the can, spilling the gasoline and sending flammable vapors into the air. The vapors reach the water heater, sparking a flashback fire that takes the life of the young child. Tragically, similar real-life incidents involving gas water heaters take the lives of or severely injure children and adults across the country each year.</b></p> <p><b>But a new, safer era in gas water heater technology begins in July, according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission and Gas Appliance Manufacturers Association, the national trade association of the manufacturers of water heating and space heating equipment and components. A voluntary standard developed by industry, in cooperation with the commission, calls for conventional tank-type gas water heaters manufactured after July 1, 2003, to be equipped with new safety technology. This technology, often referred to as a flame arrestor, prevents flashback fires by trapping and burning dangerous gas vapors inside of the heater, while preventing ignition of the vapors in the room.</b></p> <p><b>Gas water heater ignition of flammable vapors is involved in nearly 800 residential fires, resulting in an average of five deaths and 130 injuries annually, according to commission estimates. The fires typically occur when consumers use flammable liquids, usually gasoline, for cleaning purposes, or when a flammable liquid leaks or is spilled near the water heater. When the vapors come in contact with the appliance's burner or pilot light, the vapors ignite, causing a severe flashback fire.</b></p> <p><b>"The new water heaters will save lives and property and reduce the number of terrible burn injuries that are caused by these fires," said CPSC Chairman Hal Stratton. "The redesigned gas water heaters, which are already on the market, show that industry can solve difficult problems to build the safest products possible."</b></p> <p><b>"The introduction of new residential gas storage water heaters that will meet the new safety standard is the culmination of an unprecedented effort by U.S. and Canadian water heater manufacturers," said Evan R. Gaddis, President of GAMA. "This activity is a great example of the CPSC and manufacturers working in harmony, using the national voluntary standards system, to make a safe and efficient product even better. It was a great challenge to the industry to develop design solutions to this new safety requirement without compromising other efficiency or safety characteristics of gas storage water heaters. This is a testament to the commitment, ingenuity and quality of North American water heater manufacturers. The ultimate beneficiary will be U.S. consumers."</b></p> <p><b>The new American National Standard Institute standard (ANSI Z21.10.1a) was approved in two parts: The first requirement, for flammable vapors-ignition-resistance, was approved in February 2000; and the second requirement, for the heater to be resistant to lint, dust and oil accumulation, was approved in November 2002. The final standard, incorporating both parts, became effective on July 1, 2003. All 30, 40, and 50-gallon gas storage type water heaters manufactured after this date are expected to comply with the national safety standard.</b></p>		

Because millions of gas water heaters manufactured before the new standard took effect remain in homes across the country, Chairman Stratton warned that gasoline should never be stored or used indoors (in a basement or garage) where vapors can ignite. Gasoline should be stored in tightly-closed, properly-labeled, non-glass safety containers away from ignition sources and out of reach of children.

The water heater standard follows another voluntary industry standard that calls for child-resistant packaging for gasoline cans. In addition, "spill-proof" packaging being designed into many newer gas cans will also reduce the risk of ignition of gasoline fumes by water heaters.



Consumers can also view a video clip about new technology gas water heaters ([standard version](#) or a [higher quality version](#) - broadband connection recommended) ([transcript](#)). This is in "[streaming video](#)" format.

#### VNR ALERT

CPSC will feed a ready-to-air b-roll package featuring soundbites from Chairman Hal Stratton; spectacular video of flashback fires; and video of the new, safer gas water heater in action.

#### **SATELLITE COORDINATES (C-BAND) ALL TIMES EASTERN**

Date:	Tuesday, July 8	Wednesday, July 9
Time:	2:00 PM - 2:30 PM ET	10:30 AM - 11:00 AM ET
C-Band:	AMC2, Transp. 11	AMC2, Transp. 11
DOWNLINK FREQ:	3920 MHZ	3920 MHZ
AUDIO:	6.2 & 6.8	6.2 & 6.8

For technical problems with the satellite feed, please call News Broadcast Network at (212) 684-8910, Ext. 221. This satellite feed is provided by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, for your free and unrestricted use.

---

[Send the link for this page to a friend!](#) The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission is charged with protecting the public from unreasonable risks of serious injury or death from more than 15,000 types of consumer products under the agency's jurisdiction. Deaths, injuries and property damage from consumer product incidents cost the nation more than \$700 billion annually. The CPSC is committed to protecting consumers and families from products that pose a fire, electrical, chemical, or mechanical hazard or can injure children. The CPSC's work to ensure the safety of consumer products - such as toys, cribs, power tools, cigarette lighters, and household chemicals - contributed significantly to the 30 percent decline in the rate of deaths and injuries associated with consumer products over the past 30 years.

To report a dangerous product or a product-related injury, call CPSC's hotline at (800) 638-2772 or CPSC's teletypewriter at (800) 638-8270, or visit CPSC's web site at [www.cpsc.gov/talk.html](http://www.cpsc.gov/talk.html). Consumers can obtain this release and recall information at CPSC's Web site at [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov).